



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/517,032	12/07/2004	Sergio Capurro	BA-22902	2851
7590		04/10/2008		
R Neil Sudol Coleman Sudol Sapone PC 714 Colorado Avenue Bridgeport, CT 06605-1601			EXAMINER YABUT, DIANE D	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER 3734
			MAIL DATE 04/10/2008	DELIVERY MODE PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/517,032	Applicant(s) CAPURRO, SERGIO
	Examiner DIANE YABUT	Art Unit 3734

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
 - If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
 - Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 December 2007.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-13 is/are pending in the application.
 - 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-13 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/DS/06) _____
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

This action is in response to applicant's amendment received on 12/26/2007.

The examiner acknowledges the amendments made to the claims.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1-2, 4-6, and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over **Melzer** (U.S. Patent No. **5,389,103**) in view of **Villegas** (U.S. Patent No. **2,581,564**).

Claims 1-2 and 4-6: Melzer discloses an atraumatic surgical needle having two tissue penetrating and beveled needle tips **5** and comprising a tubular metal shaft having a hollow bore **35**, the shaft having a central portion that is equipped with a hole **36** on one wall of the hollow shaft through which emerges a surgical thread that is anchored inside the needle by a knot (Figures 5-6, col. 6, lines 43-53).

Melzer discloses the claimed device except for the shaft being hollow from tip to tip with at least one of the tips being open.

Villegas teaches a wholly tubular and hollow needle **10** (Figures 1-2). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to modify Melzer by having a shaft being hollow from tip to tip, as taught by Villegas, to further

anchor the thread and so that the thread may be threaded, unthreaded and sterilized repeatedly within the needle (col. 2, lines 1-4).

Claim 13: Although neither Melzer nor Villegas expressly disclose the surgical thread being fixed by means of two or more anchoring techniques, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to further secure the thread to the needle by using more than one anchoring technique, as a person of ordinary skill would recognize that doing so would strengthen the connection between the thread and the needle.

3. Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over **Melzer** (U.S. Patent No. 5,389,103) in view of **Villegas** (U.S. Patent No. 2,581,564), as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of **Scirica** (U.S. Patent No. 5,908,428).

Claim 3: Melzer and Villegas disclose the claimed device except for the surgical thread being anchored by pinching the needle.

Scirica teaches a needle wherein one end of the surgical thread **34** is inserted into the hole **212** of the needle and is anchored by pinching the needle (Figure 7 and col. 10, lines 21-26). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to anchor the surgical thread by pinching the needle, as taught by Scirica et al., to Villegas to effectively secure the thread simply by compression and eliminating the need for another securing mechanism.

4. Claims 7-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over **Melzer** (U.S. Patent No. 5,389,103) in view of **Villegas** (U.S. Patent No. 2,581,564), as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of **Coplan** (U.S. Patent No. 3,918,455).

Claims 7-11: Melzer and Villegas disclose the claimed device, including an atraumatic surgical needle with one end of the surgical thread being inserted into the hole and being anchored inside the atraumatic two-tipped needle, except for being anchored by means of a scotch, a solid bar or a portion of tube, made of metal or plastic, the caliber of which is determined by the diameter of the needle, which is pushed down inside the needle from one of the two ends.

Coplan teaches a surgical thread, emerging from one end of the needle, being inserted and anchored, or fixed, in a hole in one end of a scotch 34, a solid bar or a portion of tube, made of metal or plastic, the caliber of which is determined by the diameter of the needle, which is pushed down inside the needle from one of the two ends (Figure 4, col. 4, lines 55-63 and col. 6, lines 60-62). Coplan teaches that the use of the scotch 34 for a suture-needle combination reduces trauma at the site of tissue penetration and reduces hazard of suture tear-out (col. 1, lines 60-68). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to modify Melzer and Villegas by providing a scotch, which is pushed down inside the needle from one of two ends, as taught by Coplan, in order to reduce trauma at the site of tissue penetration and hazard of suture tear-out.

5. Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over **Melzer** (U.S. Patent No. 5,389,103) in view of **Villegas** (U.S. Patent No. 2,581,564), as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of **Borst** (U.S. Pub. No. 20040260145).

Claim 12: Melzer and Villegas disclose the claimed device, including a surgical thread being inserted into an atraumatic two-tipped needle, except for the thread being fixed between the coils of a tiny spring.

Borst teaches a suture being fixed between the coils of a tiny spring (page 11, paragraph 132). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to fix a suture between the coils of a tiny spring, as taught by Borst, to Melzer and Villegas since it was known in the art that springs are used as flexible retaining means for sutures, threads, and cords.

Response to Arguments

6. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-13 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

7. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to DIANE YABUT whose telephone number is (571)272-6831. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F: 9AM-4PM EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Todd Manahan can be reached on (571) 272-4713. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 3731

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Diane Yabut/
Examiner, Art Unit 3734

/Todd E Manahan/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3731